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SUBJECT: KUWAIT MEDIA REACTION JULY 14: APPOINTMENT OF  
SHEIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AS NEW PRIME MINISTER

Summary: All media focus on decision of Amir of Kuwait to divest the office of prime minister from the portfolio of Kuwait's ailing Crown Prince and transfer it to Minister of Foreign Affairs (and de facto head of government) Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad. Editorials, though preachy and full of didactic advice for the new PM, are unusually supportive of the appointment, which most writers hope will signal an era of good feelings in Kuwaiti governance. END SUMMARY.

[11](#). News Stories: All newspapers lead with news of the appointment of former Acting Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as the new Prime Minister of Kuwait. All newspapers report that Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad sent a letter to the Crown Prince and former Prime Minister, Sheikh Saad, "commending his sincere efforts in holding the responsibility of chairing successive governments."

Al-Qabas reports that an official source has denied reports that the Crown Prince, Sheikh Saad, was stripped of his powers as head of the government, stressing that Sheikh Saad had voluntarily submitted his resignation as required by the constitution, which calls for the resignation of the government immediately following parliamentary elections.

Al-Rai Al-Aam reports that MPs, academicians and political figures welcome the appointment of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad to form the new government, and commend the separation of the positions of Crown Prince and Prime Minister. Al-Anba newspaper reported that Shia'a scholars in Kuwait have also welcomed Sheikh Sabah's appointment.

Al-Qabas reports that Islamist Salafi Islamic Coalition chairman Khalid Sultan Al-Issa stated that the separation of the positions reflects the "beginning of a new era," and that the composition of the new cabinet will determine the level of cooperation between the government and the National Assembly.

All newspapers report a statement by the Secretary General of the Islamic Constitutional Movement, Issa Al-Shaheen that the decision is a big step towards political reform in Kuwait.

Al-Seeyasah reports that former MP Adnan Abdelsamad stated that the National Assembly is now capable of holding the Prime Minister accountable for his mistakes, in contrast to when the Crown Prince held the position.

All newspapers report that Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad is expected to announce the new Council of Ministers (cabinet) on July [15](#).

Al-Watan reports on its front page that Islamist MP Waleed Al-Tabtabaei warns against the appointment of "Westernized" ministers in the new government.

Editorials:

[13](#). "The New Government and Kuwait's Dues"  
Editor-in-chief of independent Al-Qabas, Waleed Al-Nesef, opined (7/14): "Kuwait stands at a historic moment that requires the political leadership to guide the country towards the future. [The new Prime Minister] has to appoint cabinet members who respect and defend laws, and are capable of resisting the extortion of MPs. Kuwait deserves a government that believes in the principles of participation. therefore, the number of royal family members in the new cabinet should be limited. Kuwait deserves a government that is politically balanced, not controlled or led by one current or power. We want a courageous government that is capable of making incisive decisions and is able to implement these decisions. This is a new opportunity for Kuwait to seriously solve its problems and confront the internal and the regional problems facing the country."

14. "May God Help you"

Editor-in-chief of independent Al-Watan, Mohammad Al-Jassim writes (7/14): "We have to look toward the future now after the appointment of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as the Prime Minister. Our efforts must be united to reorganize our internal affairs. The duties thrown on Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad are enormous. One of the most important issues that the government must deal with is the reformation of the relationship between the government and the National Assembly, which was troubled over the past years. Kuwait also needs to reconstruct its political and economical systems in light of regional and international events. We extend our congratulations to Sheikh Sabah and at the same time we tell him, 'May God help you.'"

15. "The Reign"

Editor-in-chief of independent Al-Rai Al-Aam, Jassim Boodai writes (7/14): "Sheikh Saad has been serving Kuwait without rest since the Sixties. He engaged in constructive dialogue in making his decisions. He stood beside the Amir on many occasions, and helped him in running the country and rebuilding Kuwait after the invasion. He ignored his doctor's advice to relax and ended up paying a dear price for his continued efforts. The assignment of Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad as Prime Minister is an honor to Sheikh Saad by reducing the load of his duties."

17. "More Important than the Appointment"

Ahmad Al-Dayeen wrote in independent Al-Rai Al-Aam (7/14): "I strongly believe that Kuwait is facing a serious political challenge and its direction depends on what the new Prime Minister aims to achieve. and the team who will assist him in his mission. Moreover, from the names I have read so far as possible Cabinet members, it appears that the next Cabinet will not be in touch with the requirements of the twentieth century. I believe that the government will include members of the religious parties, while liberals and businessmen will be excluded. This is a preliminary indication that Kuwait has not comprehended what it needs to face the future, or the changes in the region planned by the US."

18. "One Step in a One Thousand Mile Trip"

Liberal lawyer Hassan Al-Essa wrote in independent Al-Qabas (7/14): "The appointment of Sheikh Sabah as Prime Minister is an important step in a one thousand mile trip. Sheikh Sabah has before him the difficult task of implementing reforms, and is not an exaggeration to say that the new National Assembly will be an obstacle in the road reform of many issues. These are just small challenges compared to what is happening in the region."

19. "We Welcome, Cautiously"

Abdelataif Al-Duaij wrote in independent Al-Qabas (7/14): "I have mentioned on many occasions that we do not want a change in persons only [in the cabinet], but rather new and open policies. We need to be politically, socially and economically open to others. Our welcoming of Sheikh Sabah as Prime Minister depends on whether if he is capable of starting a new era or not."